1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

horse or dog could eat the flesh of man, for all three are similar and such animals and vegetables as are considered poisonous.

Snakes are regarded with a certain amount of affect, though on the whole with less than might be expected. To see a snake, particularly the *pamol-beu* (a black non-poisonous snake) approaching you is a bad omen, and should it enter a house it foretells a death in that house within the year. All dreams are meaningful, and snakes in dreams have an ominous significance. Snakes do represent a considerable danger, for they are fairly common, particularly in the lower valley and in the forest, and cultivated land is always surrounded by low scrub and secondary growth in which snakes can and do hide. I was frequently asked for medicine against snake-bite, particularly by hunters, but always as a preventative, for there were no serious cases of snake-bite while I was there, nor did I hear of any fatal ones. The Lepchas know of a dioeceous plant which is believed to cure these bites, but apparently they have not much faith in it. Snakes occur very little in mythology and fable, and have no overt phallic significance; the most common phallic symbol is the maize cob, which is almost a rude word.

ii

Lingthem monastery is a two-storied rectangular building standing on an artificially levelled terrace about 5,500 feet above sea-level, with its principal façade facing north. The first building on the site was erected in 1855 but it has since been rebuilt three times. The first building was made by Panloak, the grandfather of old Serving, the last of his line to be head of the village; the first and second renovations and enlargements were made under the direction of learned lamas who had travelled from Tibet; the third and greatest alteration was made fifteen years ago under the direction of, and to a great extent at the expense of, the Muktair, the dead father of Tafoor and Chudo. The rebuilding was done entirely by local labour in the three winter months, with help from neighbouring villages. The material was paid for chiefly by local subscription helped by donations from the State and the British Political Officer and the structure when completed was free from debt. The monastery however still owes Rs. 600 to Lhassa for the copies of the sacred books, and the heirs of the Muktair still owe money to the money lenders for the sums the Muktair undertook personally for the materials which had to be bought and for the big metal

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

or fruits, or kick them about, or perhaps improvise syphons out of bamboo. Very often at feasts and large gatherings half a dozen children will play simultaneously at the same thing, but each playing by himself. At the numerous feasts and ceremonies I was present at over three months I only once saw children playing together, and this was a tug-of-war which lasted two or three minutes.

One of the chief pursuits of the older boys is the imitating of bird calls and the catching of small birds, usually in bamboo and thread snares. Nearly every boy over the age of nine could imitate bird calls accurately through whistling, and some of them were extraordinarily good at it; Chimpet in particular was so exact that unless I looked I could never tell whether it was a boy or a bird calling. Besides this direct imitation of bird calls, which is often used to lure birds to snares, the Lepchas have nonsense-syllable equivalents (similar to our *tu-wit to-whoo*), most of them extremely unlike the calls they represented, though the Lepchas maintained they were accurate. If the boys catch edible birds in their snares they take them home as presents to their mothers. A few of the older boys also learn to make and play bamboo flutes, receiving instruction from some older brother or friend.

When children do play together it is always an imitation of adult life (the one rare exception is the imitation of fighting animals). The courtyard outside the house is the favourite scene for these plays; using small sticks or bamboos which they cut with their little knives they play at building houses or making bridges or at fencing fields; at other times they may intimate a marriage or the performance of some religious ceremony. These plays are relatively rare, for they demand the simultaneous liberty of four or five children, which does not occur very often. They hold very little place in the childhood memories of adults. The chief things adults seem to remember from their childhood are physical mishaps, usually from falling, and being punished; nearly all adults remember being carried by their elders before they could walk properly.

Children between the ages of five and ten have a special almost private vocabulary which they use in talking to one another and which is much employed in their plays. Part of this vocabulary is baby words—deformations of ordinary Lepcha speech and onomatopoeic words; the rest is made up of rather violent terms of abuse—*pahoo ʒo*, may you be a feast for devils!, *kan-tit*, heap of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

825 171 expected to become teetotallers. Amongst orthodox Hindus it is only the horn which is considered of any value. To the ignorant masses, however, all parts of the animal are sacred; and the creatures' keeper at the Calcutta Zoo is said to earn a substantial bonus by the regular sale of its excrements, for which the demand exceeds the daily supply!

The gall-bladders of bears are not in much demand in India proper, but considerable quantities are annually exported. I was once travelling on the Nepal border when I came across a large party of Tibetans. There was nothing unusual in this; but when I strolled up to talk to them I noticed a large pile of silver dollars on the ground. These men, it appeared, spent the whole of each summer touring through Nepal in search of bears' gall-bladders. When they had collected a sufficient quantity they took them to China, where they are much prized as aphrodisiacs. With the money received they bought up turquoise, for which there is a great demand in Tibet; and their surplus cash they changed into Singapore dollars. These, on account of their size (rather larger than the ordinary Indian rupee), they were able to dispose of in Nepal at a price much in excess of their actual exchange value, there to be mounted as female ornaments. Many Tibetans, so they told me, are at present engaged in this trade.

* * * * *

796 In addition to the treatment of private individuals, certain ceremonies are carried out from time to time in order to ensure the general good health of the village as a whole. They usually take place in spring and autumn, when the change of season often results in a mild epidemic of colds or dysentery. These ceremonies are prophylactic; like our own daily gargle in the influenza season.

The *Cherim*, with a note on which I started this book, was one such ceremony. It took place towards the end of March and was carried out by both Lamas and Mun, and in the presence of most of the village.

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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755 a bigger container. The father now steps from one square of the drawing to the other; his black cloth is removed when reaching square 7, while a black *yeu*, which was placed upon this square, is replaced by a white one. Then, after exchanging his stick for the bow, he proceeds to square 4, where he stops for a while, sprinkling Lepcha beer over the sick person.

In the last part of the ceremony, twisted pieces of dough are waved over the invalid as well as over those standing nearby, while prayers are chanted by the officiating priest. After making a path of ground rice towards the door, the image of the invalid is carried out together with all the other offerings and laid into the basket which is held ready outside the house. Immediately, the carriers have passed the entrance, the door is shut on them. Finally, the basket with its contents is taken to a river and thrown into the water while in the house of the sick the chanting of prayers is continued.

755 171 The ritual here described is again identical in its general outline with the *lTo* ceremonies. Many objects are used, which we identified as being important implements of the Bo'n priests: however, there are also some new elements. Thus the drawing of a tortoise bearing a magic diagram upon its belly often occurs in Tibetan representations, especially on objects used in astrology. In this connection it should be mentioned that among a group of minor Tibetan deities called *Sa bdag*,[35] "earth owners" a cosmic tortoise named *gSer gyi rus sbal*,[36] "the golden tortoise" is mentioned and that other *Sa bdag* are depicted riding tortoises. The [825] Lepchas too regard the tortoise as a cosmic creature; their lamas explain, that the *robe* is living in a subterranean sea and is kept down by the mountain Kanchenjunga, which rests upon its centre.

The peculiar flag, which is placed on top of the bamboo container, is also found upon Tibetan objects, used in rituals performed for the *Sa bdag*. Its Lepcha name—*tarchoh*—corresponds to the Tibetan *Dar lchog*, pronounced *Darcho*.

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
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775 and each patron of some sort of grain. These seven brothers are progenitors and ancestors and guardians of the Lepchas. They were created by Itpomu who placed rice and millet and maize in their charge when she made these crops. The people of Mayal live in seven huts; they are immortal; each morning they are infants,—at midday they are grown men, and in the evening they are old. They all have huge [164-787] goitres and it is from them that people know that big goitres are a sign of prosperity and a large harvest. They wear the traditional Lepcha costume of clothes made of nettle cloth and small basket-work hats. They are between gods and ordinary human beings; they are not gods because they live on earth; but they are not human because they do not die. The land of Mayal is far up the Tulung valley somewhere behind the Kinchenjunga; at some time in the past the road thither was open, but now it has been closed and is as unpassable as the cutting edge of a knife.

[776] On the road to Mayal are three guardian spirits called Sog-po, who are brothers; the eldest is called Mayel-Yook-Rum, he is also called Pong-rum when the hunters offer sacrifice to him; his younger brothers, Mi-tik and Tom-tik, are cruel deities who kill and eat men and animals. Tom-tik is like a bear. They are the special guardians of the ibex [825] and the musk deer which come from Mayal, which is the reason why these animals are so difficult to kill. In the country of Mayal crops grow a hundred times as big as here, and it is from this country that the seeds of our present crops originate. These crops are always ripe for harvesting. The migratory birds are called 'Mayel fo', birds of Mayal, and [825] they are sent out by the people of Mayal to the Lepchas to indicate the seasons and the times when various agricultural acts should be performed. When the time comes for the [825] migrating birds to return to Mayal, the parent birds die on the way and only the newly hatched ones survive the arduous journey to Mayal from whence they are sent the next year to act as indicators for the Lepchas. The people of Mayal have no wives living with them but the two oldest of the people Adoo-Yook and Alau-Yook, have in a way, as wives the two [776, 772] sisters Talyeu-Nimu and Sanguo-Nimu, who are the spirits of the earth: these two women lie on their backs on the earth

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In another legend it is told how the bear was given to the Rong as game to be hunted. "One day the ancestor of the [illegible] was going through the forest when he came on what he thought was a dead bear ; but really this bear was an incarnation of Pong rum, the king of all animals and patron god of hunters who was at the moment taking a rest outside his incarnate body. The ancestor cut up the animal and ate part of it ; whereupon Pong rum appeared to him and said, 'You have eaten part of my body ; henceforward you and your children must serve me and worship me and make offerings to me. Henceforward also you and your children may eat all animals, even snakes, with impunity.' This is the reason why the people of Pantoong could eat and enjoy snakes, whereas the rest of us would die if we ate them."[66] From these legends it appears clearly that the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing, gave to the Rong folk wild boar, bear, fish and honey as food and taught them to use bow and arrows, to shoot the game, and to catch fish with the net.

It has already been mentioned above that Pong rum, the god of the hunters, goes by different names depending on whether he drives towards the hunters, the game from the slopes of the highest mountains, or from the foot of the mountains or the plains. It appears also that these animals are looked upon as manifestations of the deity. The following story, related to us by the son of the A-chi Bong-thing who hails from a famous hunting family, lends support to this theory. "We were hunting in the thick virgin forests at the foot of the mountains at the beginning of the plains. Suddenly I came across an enormous bull with mighty horns. The bull was asleep ; yet, the sight of this gigantic animal so terrified me that I staggered, as one drunk, to the ground and felt as if my soul had left my body. That could only be the hunting god and it was useless to shoot, as he was proof against wounds. The bull awoke, stood erect, and with a thunderous bellowing drove the cows and calves further into the forest. We withdrew as quickly as we could and fled for safety." The hunters call the Mithan Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. They say that he usually lives in the higher mountains as far as the

66. Gorer, op. cit. p. 56.

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224 Tibetan frontier, but in the winter he descends into the plains.
136 He is very difficult to hunt because he is the largest of cattle, bigger even than the Tibetan Yak, which they name Yok (clearly a rendering of the Tibetan name). They have never seen a wild yak, and so are unable to compare its size. Unfortunately for me I did not succeed in seeing a Sa-dzug-big, but I obtained sufficient information to establish the difference between the Mithan, Gaur, Gayal—a question which is very confused.

136 Great confusion is caused by the change and interchange of names. In North India we find the wild cattle called the Gaur. The Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is an enormous animal which sometimes attains a height of 21 hands. The upper part of its neck is cylinder-shaped. The forehead is deeply concave. There is no dewlap. The horns are regularly poised and bend inwards at the end. But the sharpest curve is not at the end. The colour of the adult animal, especially the old bull, is deep brown, practically black. The Gaur has been erroneously called the bison. The very same description given by us above was given also in the case of the Mithan. The Gaur only inhabits the mountains and hilly countries and cannot be tamed. The Mithan is also a mountain animal and
136 is very difficult to handle in captivity. The inhabitants of
231 Sikkim say that the Mithan cannot be tamed, but that the
825 wild bulls do mate with the domesticated cows. The mixed offspring are then tamed. In the second and later generations there is a very marked difference from the wild ancestry. The greatest height is only 17 hands and the dewlap is developed. The horns are no longer regularly poised, nor are they curved inwards;—the greatest distance between the horns being now at the points. Even the colour is no longer identical.

Let us now explain why a confusion prevails over the names. The wild cattle in the Himalayas are called Mithan in Nepalese, and Sa-dzug-big in the Lepcha language. The natives say that the wild bulls cannot be tamed, but that they do mate with the domesticated cows. This intermixed breed is called Paluwa-Mithan in Nepalese, and Pamen in Lepcha. The ordinary cattle are called Siri-gay in Nepalese and Niubig in Lepcha. The cross between these animals and the very

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small Nepalese cattle is called Pahare-gay in Nepalese and Nam-tha in Lepcha. The Tibetan Yak is called Tschangri-gay in Nepalese, and Yok-big in Lepcha. The water buffalo is Arna in Nepalese and Nin-big in Lepcha. The names Gaur and Gayal, as we see, do not appear.

The Mithan sacrifice and cult play a very important part in the religious sphere of the Nagas. The Sema Nagas call the wild Mithan "aviela," the cross of this wild cattle with the domesticated cattle is "avi"; the cross of avi achuka (black humped cattle) is aselhu, the cross Avi with Kolaghu (ordinary cattle) is avyega or vivghu.

In the Chongli (C) and Mongsen (M) dialect of the Ao Naga, cross of the wild bull and the cow is called sü and atsü (M); the ordinary cow nashi (C) and masü (M); the progeny of the above cross and the ordinary cow mukza (C & M).[67] We suppose that all the natives have such special names and that they certainly draw a distinction between the different varieties of animals. The confusion arose from the fact that the Europeans and Indians regarded the Mithan and Gayal as one (*Bos frontalis*). The wild Mithan and the Gaur are different local variations of the same animal. Apart from this, it is clear that the two different wild breeds do not overlap each other in their geographical distribution. This would have been the case if the Mithan and Gaur were two different species of wild cattle. East of the Bay of Bengal the Banteng (*Bos sondaicus*) appears as a new breed.[68]

The names Gaur and Gayal originate from Hindi. The Sanskrit root "go" means bull and cow; and gavah, the plural, cattle. The modern Hindi name is derived from these: gay and gau, cow; gava, wild cattle, from which gaur is derived; gavya and gayaval—"that which appertains to the cow." Gayal is then derived from gayaval, as the bastard is not the ordinary type of cattle but is associated with the cow.

67. J. P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London 1926, p. 132 sq.
68. R. C. Baker, The Gaur and the Gayal, (Bos gaurus and bos frontalis), The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. xv, 227 sq., T. R. Livesey, The Gayal or Mithan (Bos frontalis), id. Vol. p. 199 sq., W. S. Thom, Some notes on Bison (Bos gaurus) in Burma, id. Vol. p. 106 sq., W. T. Blanford, On the Gaur (Bos gaurus) and its allies, from the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, Vol. VI, 1891, 222, seq., M. Hermanns, Were animals first domesticated and bred in India? Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXVII, Pt.11, 1952, p. 134 sq.

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136 [71] Gaval and Arna are the Hindi names for the water-buffalo. In Bombay State, as far as the Central Provinces the name Ran bhainsa, water buffalo, is used for Gaur. In Mahrathi, it is pronounced gavya ; in Tamil, katuerimai ; in Malayalam, karthu ; in Kanarese, kar-kona.[69]

[231 232] The wild Gaur and the Mithan cannot be tamed. The Gayal, which is wrongly called the Mithan, has no wild ancestor, but is only a cross between the wild bull and the domesticated cow. A clear proof of the mongrel characteristics of the Gayal is this : In districts where the Gaur are numerous and therefore more frequently mate with the domestic cows, the Gayal shows some resemblance to the Gaur, —the massive build with high backbone, etc. Through the constant adding of wild blood this characteristic is preserved, *e.g.* in the upper mountains of Assam. In districts where the Gaur are rare as for instance in the Chin hills, the build of the mongrel is smaller, the ridge at the back disappears, the dewlap grows larger and the horns more like those of the cows. By the fourth generation the maternal component of the ordinary cattle is again quite dominant.[70] In these circumstances one should no longer look for the wild ancestors of the Gayal.

224 262 825 There is also a species of animals which the Rong do not kill, *viz.* the wild dog which is reddish in colour. Nor are they allowed to eat the flesh of tame dogs and horses. In this respect they are on par with the Tibetans.

776 There are legends pertaining to other curious creatures which are supposed to live in the thick virgin forests. Bönmän-che is the Nepalese name ; a "Wild man" who is said to be about as large as a great monkey. The Lepcha name for this creature is Sog-pa. Another being is the Bön-sacri, the "Wild magician." This creature is believed to kidnap the children of men and lead them away into the depths of the forest, where it instructs them in the arts of magic and makes them so accustomed to the wild forest life that they shun the company of men. The wives of the Bön-sacri are the Lidini, the "Wild wives." The Rong hunter must be proof against [782] the attacks of all these beings, and so he pays tribute to and

69. S. H. Prater, Indian Animals, Bombay, p. 204.
70. S. H. Prater, op. cit. p. 201 sq.

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Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.[102] These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult.

This certainly is not the case with the Rong ; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes.

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."[103] When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.[104] It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected. "Werbitzkij mentions in his decription of Shamanism in the Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

102. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.
103. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.
104. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

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illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."[105]

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."[106] They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.[107] All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(*k*) The Social Classes of the Rong.

According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immese forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

105. op. cit. p. 462.
106. op. cit. p. 478.
107. op. cit. p. 478.

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them inedible. Some of the Rong are passionate hunters and spend months away from home on their expeditions. They send the game to their families through others. These hunters venerate certain deities, Gom-shi-rum and Gom-yu-rum, who inspire them with this passion for hunting. The Rong hunter is intimately acquainted with the ways of the wild; he knows every track, and can judge the time when the animal passed that way. He sets out in their tracks and pursues them tirelessly until he sights his quarry. Some of these hunters have won legendary fame. They told us of the father of A-chi Bong-thing, that he fearlessly pursued tigers and elephants. The very look in his eyes was so hypnotic that the animals, filled with frenzied fear, fled away from his glance as much as from his arrow.

The Lepcha makes his bow from the Ma-li-lang bamboo. The larger bows are about 1 and ¾ meter long, and the shorter ones about 1 and ½ meter. The section of the bow shaft is 1/3 of a circle. The flat side of the shaft is inwards and the concave side outward. One end of the bow consists of a double knob separated by a notch which holds the string fastening. The other end has a notched pin in which the string can be easily fixed or removed. The string is made from Dzu-ya bamboo. At the ends are little ridges round which hemp threads are bound in order to fasten the string to the ends of the bow.

The arrow, which is about 50 cms. in length, is made from Po-rang bamboo. At the end is a notch which fits into the string. At the top of the shaft a fish tailed arrow head is let in. The quiver is made from the Bug-wood which grows in the plains. A bamboo loop fastened in the middle facilitates the carrying of the quiver. Another type of bow is used for shooting birds. It is smaller and the construction is slightly different. The bow shaft has a ridge of bamboo in the middle of the inner section of the shaft. The string is stretched into a little network in the middle which holds the pellets. The birds are shot with little taws of clay. (Fig. 22-24).

[text continues on p. 100]